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SUBJECT: Media Reaction Rio de Janeiro: War and Peace--A Time for
Soldiers or Teachers?

War and Peace

A Time for soldiers or teachers?

Rio-based center-left daily Jornal do Brasil writes: "President Barack Obama's decision to send 30,000 additional soldiers to the war in Afghanistan is still echoing. There are those who criticize this militaristic option, cautioning that many weapons do not necessarily bring about a long-lasting peace (...) The discussion relating to Afghanistan, at least recently, is relatively superficial. And it needs to be deepened to include a historical perspective (...) Shortly after his inauguration, Barack Obama announced with pomp and circumstance an investment of USD 200 million in schools to be built with American help along the porous and hostile frontier with Pakistan, a region where feelings of goodwill toward fundamentalist Taliban thrive and [a region] responsible for the training of important cells in Osama Bin Laden's Al Qaeda network. Looking at this argument from a distance, one may believe that it is a good and well-intended measure (...) The difficulty seems to be the very essence of the U.N.'s role (...) Since the fall of the Taliban in 2003, there is an insistence on solidifying the model of participatory democracy [in the country] with a parliament, something that is difficult to do in a country with such deeply-rooted tribal divisions. Those who live in Kabul may have even started to believe that voting in the Loya Jyrga (the assembly) is the best way to build a future. But the man that leads his goats through the mountains like his father and all his ancestors has a different view of the world. The West needs to understand it too if it wants there to be some permanent peace in the region." (Sunday, Dec 6, page A8)

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